

September 23, 2021 - Fresh Pond Reservation Master Plan Advisory Board Meeting

Minutes (conducted via Zoom)

Submitted: Sam Corda – November 18, 2021

Advisory Board Members in Attendance:

Janice Snow (Chair), David Kaplan, Janet Burns, Sophia Emperador, Claudia Thompson, David Lyons, Jennifer Letourneau and Susan Agger

Advisory Board Members Not in Attendance:

Jim Barton, Adam Corbeil, Candace Young, Deborah Masterson and Ann Roosevelt

Water Department in Attendance:

Sam Corda, Ed Dowling, Vinnie Falcione, Tim Puopolo and Jamie O'Connell

Others in Attendance:

Ken Vorspan - Public

Meeting opened at 6:05 pm

Meeting Minutes: S. Corda

Item 1: Review Agenda

Item 5 was discussed prior to Item 4

Item 2: Meeting Minutes

David Lyons moved, and Janet Burns seconded the motion to approve the March 18, 2021 meeting minutes as amended. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Janet Burns moved, and Susan Agger seconded the motion to approve the May 20, 2021 meeting minutes as amended. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Item 3: Maynard Ecology Center (MEC) Report – Part 2

Susan Agger, MEC Director reported that despite the end of remote learning at CPS and the return of field trips, the MEC is still closed for in-person learning. Typically, between 700-1200 students use the MEC each year.

There was continued discussion on the need for separate bathrooms within the MEC classroom and the need for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for use of the current facility at Neville for the Maynard Center in perpetuity. The new Director for Neville has made available a single bathroom that they “deep clean” before and after each program/class. Susan Agger has been pursuing the separate bathroom request starting with Neville Management and then with the School Department. She has edited a draft letter from the Advisory Board Chair and a member of the Water Board to the City Manager requesting assistance and a MOU and noting that along with students the MEC also serve adult groups learning about the Reservation ecology. Sam Corda will speak with the Manager on this issue.

Item 4: Wildlife Issues

There are a few options that we could use to deter deer which have been browsing on seedlings particularly in the woodland garden in the Lusitania triangle. The first would be to apply an

organic liquid to plants to make them less palatable to deer. The second could be fencing which would have to be at least 5 feet tall or the deer will jump it. We had been using 4 foot high brush piles, but the deer jump over them. Another option used in more remote parkland is a controlled deer hunt which would be problematic given the Reservation's urban location and heavy usage.

On concerns that rat traps used at the Tobin School construction project might harm Reservation wildlife that eat rat carrion, Ranger Tim Puopolo discussed the types and effects of baited rat traps. Rat poison is a second-generation anti-coagulant (AC), and it has been found that a secondary affect can kill birds. These poisons are legal for use at the Tobin site. The Reservation's hawks and owls are at particular risk.

Coyotes at the Reservation were briefly discussed. In general, they do not seem to be a threat to vegetation and/or people within the Reservation.

Tim Puopolo mentioned that no one should feed any wildlife at Fresh Pond.

Item 5: FY22 & FY23 Budgeting Master Plan

Reduced water use by universities and hotels (18 to 20% of usage) during Covid resulted in a one million dollar revenue shortfall. Water treatment filters must be changed to further reduce the levels of PFASs (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) in our drinking water to meet projected new standards. This will add \$1.5 million per year to treatment costs.

The schedule for the Black's Nook and the Pine Forest Projects has not been determined and will depend on available funding. The design of these projects will be taken out of the annual Fresh Pond Reservation capital funds. Additional funds may become available from the American Rescue Plan.

Item 6: Watershed Manager's Report

Black's Nook: The project team will follow up with DEP for an approved sediment testing protocol for lead. They will also discuss what the plan will be for the sediments after they are fully tested to DEP standards.

Pine Forest/DCR Greenway: The Greenway is scheduled to have a soft opening in late October with the proposed substantial completion on 10-21-21. There currently is no official opening date.

Temporary Signage: Sandwich boards will be placed at the Treatment Plant entrance and under the Huron Avenue bridge to identify the Pine Forest as a sensitive natural area and a wildlife crossing when the greenway is opened.

Glacken Slope/Huron Avenue Sidewalk: The slope planting work was very successful, and the sidewalk/street work will likely start in the Spring 2022.

Little Fresh Pond Shoreline: The proposed plan was approved and permitted by the Conservation Commission and an Order of Conditions (OOC) was issued. We expect this work will be performed in the Spring of 2022. We may have to lower the pond to install the new supports.

Greenway Retention/Detention Basin (near WTP): We decided to delay the mulch removal/ “woodland seed mix” until all of the warrantee issues are resolved.

Landscape Management Report: Mowing, slice seeding, aeration has started. Weeding and invasives removal continues. An invasive crew removed knotweed on Glacken slope.

Item 7: Eco-Counter/Fresh Pond User Report

Jamie O’Connell gave a presentation on the 2020 eco-counter census program data collected. Censor data showed a significant increase in usage from previous years. The greatest increase was in human walkers. The full presentation can be found using the link below:

https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/waterdepartment/Watershed/Programs/censusprogram/2020/2020_ExecSummary_FINAL.pdf

Susan Agger, Janet Burns, and Janice Snow commented on the thoroughness and importance of this information.

Item 8: Pat Pratt Memorial Grove Update

The planting of the three oak trees was completed and the Pat Pratt Grove designation was approved. Three cedar posts will mark off the area. An understory planting plan will be developed in the future.

Janice Snow moved and Janet Burns seconded the motion to establish a proposed boundary, and develop a planting and maintenance plan for the Pat Pratt Memorial Grove. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Item 9: Status: Advisory Board Naming Recommendations for Completed Drainage/Community Garden Project Area to City Manager

Sam Corda will check with the City on the status of the Board’s January 2021 recommendation to rename the Drainage/Community Garden project area “Harrington Way or Harrington Gateway”.

Item 10: Preliminary Agenda for September Meeting

Watershed Mangers Report, Updates on Huron Ave and Pine Forest, FY22 & 23 Budgeting Master Plan Projects Update.

Item 11: Public Comment

Ken Vorspan asked why poison ivy continued to grown along the Reservoir fences given our reported invasive removal work. He thought that existing signs and public information/education on poison ivy were inadequate. He suggested ways that poison ivy could be removed all the fences and the Reservation.

Dave Kaplan noted all of the methodologies that have been used to remove Poison Ivy: clip the vines, approved herbicides (salt and citric acid based), and steam, all which have had very limited success on this aggressive native plants spread by birds. Vinnie Falcione noted the clipping and hand pulling has been used at the Reservation to reduce the volume, but complete eradication is not possible given the location and native plantings.

Ken Vorspan was adamant that we could do a better job at this and an example he suggested was to use goats to eat it.

Sophia Emperador moved, and David Kaplan seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:04pm.